

Message Text

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ORIGIN ARA-10

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TO ALL AMERICAN REPUBLIC DIPLOMATIC POSTS PRIORITY

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TAGS: SNAR

SUBJECT: CONGRESSIONAL HEARINGS ON DECRIMINALIZATION OF
MARIJUANA -- THE COCAINE QUESTION.

REF: STATE 047056

1. REFTEL PROVIDED THE STATEMENT OF DR. PETER BOURNE,
SPECIAL ASSISTANT TO THE PRESIDENT, ON DECRIMINALIZATION
OF MARIJUANA. DURING THE COURSE OF THE HEARINGS, THE
CHAIRMAN OF THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON NARCOTICS, CONGRESSMAN
WOLFF, ALSO ASKED WHETHER THE ADMINISTRATION CONTEMPLATED
DECRIMINALIZATION OF COCAINE POSSESSION IN SMALL AMOUNTS
FOR PERSONAL USE. DR. BOURNE RESPONDED THAT THIS IS AN
EXTREMELY COMPLICATED ISSUE AND "WE ARE IN THE PROCESS
NOW OF VERY CAREFULLY RE-EXAMINING OUR POSITION ON THAT
ISSUE. THE RE-EXAMINATION WOULD BE CARRIED OUT OVER THE
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NEXT FEW WEEKS AND WOULD INVOLVE FOREIGN AS WELL AS DOMES-
TIC POLICY" THIS EXCHANGE WAS REPORTED IN THE NEW YORK
TIMES AND WASHINGTON POST.

2. THE OFFICE OF DRUG ABUSE POLICY (ODAP) IN THE WHITE
HOUSE UNDER DR. BOURNE'S DIRECTION WILL FORM A GROUP WITHIN
THE NEXT FEW DAYS TO CONSIDER U.S. POLICY ON NARCOTICS IN

LATIN AMERICA. COCAINE WILL BE A CENTRAL ISSUE.

3. PENDING THE RESULTS OF THAT REVIEW YOU MAY ASSURE HOST COUNTRY OFFICIALS, IF ASKED, THAT DR. BOURNE'S COMMENTS ON COCAINE DO NOT IMPLY DOWNGRADING OF OUR INTEREST IN SUBSTANTIALLY REDUCING INTERNATIONAL TRAFFIC IN COCAINE OR OUR COOPERATIVE PROGRAMS WITH OTHER GOVERNMENTS FOR THAT PURPOSE. THE REVIEW IS PART OF AN OVERALL STUDY OF NARCOTICS OBJECTIVES BY THE NEW ADMINISTRATION. WE DO NOT WANT TO PRE-JUDGE THE RESULTS WHICH COULD BRING SOME CHANGES, BUT YOU MAY POINT OUT THAT PRESIDENT CARTER IN HIS MARCH 5 TELEPHONE TALK SAID HE WAS "DOING ALL I CAN TOWARD MOVING AS AGGRESSIVELY AS POSSIBLE TO STAMP OUT THE TRAFFIC IN DRUGS LIKE COCAINE OR HEROIN. I BELIEVE THEY HAVE A DEVASTATING INFLUENCE ON SOCIETY AND OUGHT TO BE ELIMINATED AS MUCH AS WE CAN."
VANCE

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